TOWN & COUNTRY CHURCH

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The Rural Church Today Faces Tomorrow*

HENRY S. RANDOLPH

• A large number of the rural churches in America trace their histories to the early pioneer days. In many instances the founding was the direct result of a pioneering, inner driving Christian mission to convert a new found pagan people to Christianity. But as the Indian became less and less a great opposing religious force in the land, this original missionary urgency declined in vigor. And by this time the number of churches in the several denominations had far outgrown the ability of their denominations nationally to provide adequate leadership, supervision, and financial aid to all its new found churches. It was at this point that the churches began to decline. In some of the older communities this decline started more than 100 years ago; in other communities it started much later. However, the national church was not aware of this declining situation until we were well within the first quarter of this century.

Commission on Country Life

The church was awakened out of its complacent slumbers by a national movement initiated by President Theodore Roosevelt through the appointment of the Commission on Country Life on August 10, 1908. This was the beginning of the rural life movement in America.

Following the publication of the Commission's report, there were rapid developments in many directions. The Commission recognized the high sociological importance of the church in country life. It also lifted up certain chronic problems such as pastorless or vacant churches, a poorly trained ministry for the job, inadequate financial support, and especially the unnecessary and harmful duplication and divisiveness of churches in a given community, motivated by irrelevant dogma, petty doctrinal differences and narrow sectarianism.

The Rural Life Commission saw the rural church at its best built upon the great Christian principles, functioning as a strong social center, building up the moral and spiritual tone of the whole community. It featured the pastor as a community leader, acquainted with rural problems, knowing and loving country people and their way of life. The commission realized that such a leadership would require specialized and professional rural training, thus challenging the colleges, training schools and theological seminaries to reconsider their programs for ministerial training.

The report of the Commission on Country Life gave a positive challenge to the religious leaders of the nation to rethink the function of the rural church in American life. Many books and pamphlets and articles were written by able and committed rural church leaders such as Warren Wilson, Paul Vogt, Malcolm Dana and others.

A National Program

This effort led to new rural church methods, new forms of Chris-

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* From an address before the Indiana Convocation of Town and Country Churches, Purdue University, November 10, 1955.

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A. Devaney, Inc., N. Y.

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tian ministry to rural people, and to new patterns of organization, such as the creation of denominational Town and Country Church Departments with secretaries on the national level to promote and serve the interests of country churches. We now have seventeen national denominational departments of town and country church, with as many as three full-time secretaries in some of them. These national secretaries constitute the Committee on Management of the Department of Town and Country Church of the National Council of Churches. This is the national unifying agency for all town and country churches, sponsoring such activities as the National Convocation of Town and Country Church, the publication, TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH, and many conferences for the unifying of our thinking and efforts.

As this national program was developing, state councils of churches came into being, spreading rapidly over the United States. Many of these councils have a rural department charged with the development and improvement of rural religion within the state.

While all this rethinking and reorganization was taking place, things were happening on the local level. We moved out of the horse and buggy era into a higher speed era. We moved out of a small neighborhood psychology and sociology into that of a larger community, where consolidations for higher efficiency were being effected. Rural schools were merging into larger central units for more effective education of the youth. Some churches found it desirable to federate, unite or cooperate for a richer and more desirable church program for the community. Thus the theory and practice of interdenominational cooperation has been well established.

Comparable progress has been made in other areas of our concern. In recent years many of our theological seminaries have had a conversion. They now know that there is a rural church and that it is important and should have specially, technically trained men in its leadership.

Along with better trained and longer tenured leadership have come better salaries, pensions, parish travel expense, and better homes, manses and parsonages.

All this is to say that the rural church of today is on the move, with some excellent, specialized rural church leadership and supervision on the local, state, and national levels. This leadership, in cooperation with town and country people interested in their church serving the community, is building a new rural church.

The Rural Church of Tomorrow

It is my judgment that we must come to grips with two major problems in America as we determine tomorrow's strategy for our town and country churches. These are, first, a double header—the declining farm population and the enlarging rural community; and second, the growth of the American urban-fringe population.

Farm areas throughout the nation are constantly losing in population especially when located too far from employing industrial or commercial centers. We are quite conscious of the fact that the greatly reduced number of farmers remaining on the land have adequately supplied our $70,000,000,000 bread basket in addition to our exports to other nations and also created an embarrassing problem by our mounting farm surplus. Consequently, we have fewer farm people needing and supporting the church. Furthermore, the church comes at a much higher price than formerly. The minister costs them more than twice as much. His car expense and pension must be paid; he must be provided a good modern home. The church must have good program materials or the people will not be interested. All this sums up to much more expense for a constantly decreasing number of people in farm areas to bear.

Then, there may be too few people left in the neighborhood to have adequately functioning organizations in the church, such as youth, men, and women, especially so since the Baptist Church across the road has most of the people, and since the Methodist Church is only one-half mile down the road, and some of the people go into town to church six miles west of us. These churches and the families are the only social institutions left in this neighborhood.

Within recent years, due to the rapid development of highways, high speed transportation, rural electrification, telephone, radio, T.V., and the consolidation of schools and other community agencies, the geographical size of the rural community has greatly expanded, calling for the consideration of a different sort of rural church—one equipped and capable of serving this larger area, thus offsetting the otherwise serious problem of too few people for an adequate functioning church. If the church insists upon serving only its original, small neighbor-

hood, it is likely to be too small for effective service, but if it conceives of this larger community as its parish, it will not likely be too small for an effective ministry.

We need to develop new rural church strategy to meet these changing situations.

The Larger Parish Plan

One denomination recognizing the shift of population from farm areas, resulting in increasing difficulties in sustaining its seven rural churches in a certain county as separate and individual neighborhood units, approached the problem in this way: They made a careful analytical church survey of the county, the larger community, studying the population shifts; the history of the churches over the past thirty years, the economic basis of the people; the various institutions in the county including churches of other denominations. They found their churches in a ragged, pastorless and dispirited condition. They suffered at the hands of a migrant, itinerant, and irregular ministry. No real pastoral work was done. Their membership and Sunday school enrollments were declining. They were almost at the end of the rope.

It was concluded that a denominational larger parish would solve their problem. Therefore, they united themselves organically for a program and ministry through a parish council composed of four laymen and women representatives of each of the seven churches. They called two young ordained ministers, one of them having had larger parish experience, one specially trained in music, and a professionally trained woman in Christian education as director of Christian education for the parish. These churches soon discovered new strength and power through this cooperative program. They think of themselves less and less as seven separate churches, but as one church or parish with several neighborhood units.

A church ministry to a larger community in most American situations will require interdenominational cooperation. In the Dale Hollow Larger Parish are eighteen churches —Methodist, Disciples, and Presbyterian. Before the parish was organized the churches were weak and struggling for existence. But now there is life and enthusiasm. This sort of a rural church program cannot die.

The Urban-Fringe

This is where people of different backgrounds and traditions live in the same community; some are farmers, some ex-farmers, many are urban or suburban folks. Since they have had their religious experience in some other community, it is possible that they may not find a church of their denomination in the community into which they move. They may turn out to be church shoppers for a year or so.

In many instances the local churches with long histories and traditions in the communities, with old well-established denominational programs of activity cannot meet the needs of these new people, and they may not try or care to. They may not want to be bothered with the newcomers!

Here, then, is another condition which calls for interdenominational study and action; for the fringe population represents in its previous religious affiliation a multiple denominational background. A nontraditional form of religious organization, and a minimum of sectarian authority, which will recognize, accept, and use this background is indicated. Where existing local churches cannot meet the challenge, new ones must be created.

Whither the town and country church of tomorrow? If it is satisfied

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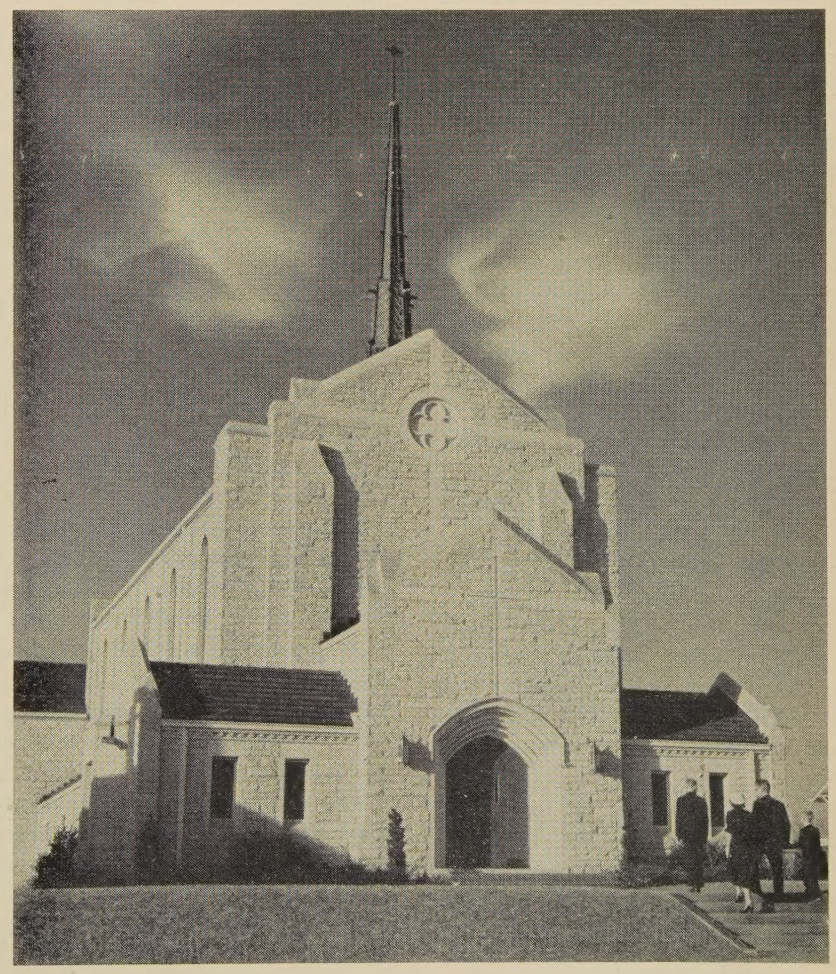

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to rest its case upon the earnings of the past, its history and traditions, however rich they may be, the church is destined to find its end.

If it wishes to tread alone in its small neighborhood and selfish sectarian pattern in the midst of a diminishing population without the cooperation necessary for the pooling of resources for the making of a desirable program, the end is surely near at hand.

However, that church which reaches out with keen imagination and eagerness to embrace the challenging changes in rural society with such programs as the larger parish to serve the total community, or to adapt its building, program, and staff for a growing urban fringe or new peoples, will always be a growing church.

The church that cooperates effectively with all the community agencies in serving the community will be so integrated in the life of the community that it shall ever grow like a tree planted by the rivers of water, bearing tomorrow's fruit, for this church is rooted deeply in the life of society.

Yes, some of our rural churches will be lost in the Armageddon of our changing times, as they grope nostalgically for the past. However, I see the rural church of tomorrow facing its greatest opportunity of all ages to be a creative, saving force in the new American community as it gears itself into the life, thought, and activity of this new day in rural society, taking itself to all the people.

Rural people across America are calling for this new rural church, the church of tomorrow, a church with a program bearing a new quality of life to the community, and a minister with a vision for the rural community and skills with which to build the Kingdom of God among them.

The rural church of tomorrow calls not for men of little thoughts and ability but rather for great men, men of vision, wisdom, grace, love, and power to lead it. It also calls for faithful and loving laymen and women to undergird the minister as he leads them into this new mid-century Christian adventure.

I believe the Kingdom of God will come in rural America, as we seek his will through a creative ministry *with* rural people.

For a full report of the Indiana Convocation of town and country churches, held at Purdue University, November 10-11, 1955, read Lonnie Hass's account—Pages 14-15.

Study of TV and Radio

• Top leaders of Protestant churches must turn their attention to the development of a policy for television and radio programs, instead of leaving these matters to a few specialists or using the programs mainly for specialized fund-raising or teaching projects.

This is one of the conclusions published in a new book, "The Television-Radio Audience and Religion" (Harper & Bros.)-based upon a two-year study conducted in New Haven, Connecticut, by the National Council of Churches under the supervision of the Yale Divinity School.

The study is described in a preface to the book as "the largest, most authoritative available body of research information on the subject of religious broadcasting."

Some specific findings of the survey were:

Religious programs tend to be watched by specific types of audiences, rather than by broad cross-sections of the population.

Athough religious programs tend to be sixth in popularity among audiences, television stations grant only one per cent of the total time to such telecasts.

Few pastors of local churches have given serious consideration to the impact of radio or TV upon their constituents.

Three out of five households watch or listen to some religious program with regularity.

Leading Roman Catholic programs have a much larger audience than leading Protestant programs.

Family groups find programs based directly on the Bible the most interesting and useful of all religious programs.

Audiences for Protestant programs are found largely among persons of late middle age or older.

Only one person among the 3,559 families interviewed said he was brought into a church through the direct influence of a television or radio program.

Art Collection Presented to CROP

• The people of Germany have presented a collection of modern paintings and graphics to CROP—Christian Rural Overseas Program of Church World Service—in gratitude for shipments of food gifts by the agency to German war victims and refugees. Most of the forty-six works in the collection have been rendered by Germans who were themselves recipients of CROP gifts. The works were purchased by a foundation to which millions of Germans have contributed.

The collection was presented to CROP officials by Dr. W. H. van Almstick, German Consul in Detroit on behalf of German President Theodor Heuss, who heads the foundation.

Officials said that of the almost $20 million worth of food sent by the agency to fifty countries since 1947, about a quarter was distributed in refugee camps and impoverished communities in Germany. CROP is the program for the collection of food for needy people overseas of Church World Service, international relief and rehabilitation wing of the National Council of Churches.

Send Us an Item

• Town and Country Church is a cooperative enterprise. Send us an item for publication. We want short news items as well as longer articles describing parish programs.

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Contributors of articles to TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH speak for themselves and not for the National Council of Churches or sponsoring organizations.

Purposes of This Journal

The purposes of this Journal are:

A. To encourage cooperation among rural churches.

B. To improve the administration of the local church, this to include organization of the church, finance, religious education, community relationships, and the training of lay leadership.

C. To stimulate the development of a Christian philosophy of rural life, this to embrace ethical issues in agriculture, social reconstruction, and government programs; and the content of the minister's message.

Part of Larger Program

The Journal is an important part of an enlarged "cooperative rural church program" that will encourage a national "rural church movement."

Criteria for an Effective Questionnaire

WILLIAM G. JAMISON

• The questionnaire appears to be the most widely used means of gathering data for theses and research articles in the field of rural church. Its wide popularity is obvious: it is convenient, time-saving, and inexpensive as compared to most of the other techniques. But because of its over-use and questionable validity, there has been a growing antagonism toward it as shown in the literature pertaining to social research. However, it is maintained here that it is a very useful tool provided it is carefully devised and utilized. It should not be discarded but should be further improved and applied where its use is most advantageous. Let us discuss here means whereby it can be strengthened to add quality for research purposes.

First of all, the worker must make a careful study of the problem area before he should consider devising a questionnaire. He may find in the literature that sufficient research has already been conducted to satisfy his wishes. Or he may discover that the questionnaire technique may not be readily applicable for this type of material. After due study, he may see that the interview, the case study, or other techniques or a combination of them may be more feasible.

Pilot Study

After he has sufficiently familiarized himself with the field and if he feels assured that the questionnaire is applicable, the research worker should then devise a tentative questionnaire with the aid of other workers and send it to a selected few for a pilot study. The use of a pilot study can not be over-emphasized; its use may save time, effort and money at a later stage.

Upon receiving the results of the pilot study, the data should be tabulated on a carefully arranged sheet as if for the final report. Having gone through these steps, the researcher will almost inevitably find many items in need of improvement—the format of the questionnaire may be poor, certain words should be changed, some questions need to be left out; certain responses cannot be readily tabulated for statistical manipulation; additional items are necessary, etc. He may find from this that another pilot study is necessary.

After he is certain that the questionnaire is ready for the final study, he may issue it to a carefully selected sample and continue with his study. But above all he must exercise patience and care in making certain that he has eliminated the "loopholes." A little extra time and effort will prove valuable.

Principles

More specifically, the final questionnaire should conform to these principles:

1. The questionnaire should be a part of a worthwhile study involving a recognized problem.
2. The study should be meaningful and worthwhile to the recipient of the questionnaire.
3. The study should be sponsored by recognized authorities or a reputable institution.
4. The questionnaire should be accompanied by a brief, friendly and informative letter of explanation.
5. The format should be attractive.
6. The questionnaire should be geared specifically to the recipient.
7. The directions should be complete and clearly stated.
8. The questions should be clear, specific, and brief, each requiring answers of brevity.
9. Questions should usually require answers of fact instead of opinion.
10. The questions should be arranged and worded for ease in coding and tabulation.
11. The questions should be arranged so that systematic error responses can be minimized, as in multiple-choice questions.

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12. The questions should not involve complicated professional jargon unless the respondent is known to be expert in the area.

13. The questions should not be worded so that the recipient will use rationalization or justification in his response.

14. The nature of the questions should not raise objections to their being answered.

15. The questions should be arranged in a logical sequence.

16. The questionnaire should be brief.

17. The questionnaire should reach the respondent at an opportune time so that he will more readily find an opportunity to answer it.

18. Leave spaces on the questionnaire for any comments which the respondent may like to make.

19. The respondent should be informed later of the results of the study.

Sibelius at 90

• "Sibelius' identification with the fields, the woods, the sea and the sky is so profound that it has always permeated his music," writes Howard Taubman in the *New York Times Magazine,* December 4, 1955, in an article on the 90th anniversary of the birth of the noted Finnish composer.

"His feeling for nature is not that of the observer and sentimentalist.

"It is as though he was one with it all in its wildest and most vivid or most somber manifestations.

"In a period of dejection, he got up one day during the first World War, went out into a benevolent out-of-doors and wrote in his diary: 'A wonderful day, spring and life. The earth exhales a fragrance—united and fortissimo. . . .'

"Even now . . . Sibelius walks in the woods near his home when the weather is good. . . .

"The music of Sibelius lives on—sturdy, generous, cooly luminous as the white nights of Finland.

"For a passage in the finale of the *Third Symphony,* Sibelius gave this instruction: 'Play it like the song of a lark.' "

The Gospel and Village Life*

I. W. MOOMAW

• Missionaries have long recognized the relevance of the Gospel to the day to day problems of village people. In the year 1821, William Carey, an early British missionary to India, wrote home to his people, "Send me seeds. Send regularly roots from the best plants, and implements of husbandry. The people to whom we preach are hungry, and many starve." Since then there has been steady progess in agricultural missions, but most of the mission boards have been greatly strengthening this phase of their work, especially in this post war period of increased need.

In the year 1950 there were sixty-two full time agricultural missionaries serving abroad under the different mission boards. At present there are one hundred and fifty-six. If present plans carry through this number may be nearly doubled by the year 1960. We do not suggest that the church alone, through its missionaries, can do the job. There is much that only Governments can do. We recognize too, that the redemption of rural life is the work of God, not man. However, it is encouraging to see how well this form of Christian Witness and concern has prospered during recent years.

Some Notable Developments

The first training course for rural missionaries was started by Mr. John H. Reisner and others in the year 1930. Since then, nearly two-thousand have taken such special courses. Those still on the field are serving under forty-four different mission boards in more than fifty countries.

Of special interest this past year has been the sponsoring of seventeen rural work conferences for missionaries, national churchmen and government officers in different areas of the world. Such meetings, sponsored by Agricultural Missions, Inc., were held in: Mexico; Cuba; Egypt; Near East India (4 Conferences); Indonesia (2 Conferences); Philippine Islands; Japan (2 Conferences); Africa (4 Conferences).

They were supported financially through a supplemental grant from the Ford Foundation.

Of special importance, too, is the large number of students in colleges of Agriculture and Home Economics who are offering themselves for rural mission service. In 1952 our files held records of two hundred such young people. Since then, the number of inquiries has increased to over four hundred.

Recent world developments have placed before the churches a new challenge to present the Gospel of Christ in concrete, practical ways. There are several reasons for this.

First; there is an awakened world conscience. Once the people accepted mass hunger, famine and misery as just facts of life that could not be changed. Now people everywhere believe something can and must be done. Also, there is a rising hope and unrest among village people as they strive for a better and more satisfying way of life. Technological advances have made it possible to share some of the advantages of health and increased production with vast numbers of people. But most important of all, people have come to realize in a new way the relevance of the Gospel to such day-to-day problems as hunger, low crop yields, soil erosion and usury.

The alleviation of poverty, even to a moderate degree, is a complex and difficult problem. One is troubled by cheap publicity, emanating from some who offer pseudo-remedies for age-old problems. Some would have us feel that oppressed people only need to extend their hands and receive pellets of "know how." One wishes the task were as easy as that. But sober minds know of no short cuts or easy solutions.

The task is not a technical one alone. It is a spiritual problem of man's relationship to his neighbor in the fair use of the resources God has provided. Oppressed people must have a valid basis for hope, an assurance that they will receive a fair

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* From an address before the Assembly of the National Council of Churches' Division of Foreign Missions, Dayton, Ohio, 1955.

share of any increase that their extra labor and expense may produce.

It has been given us to see vast and worthy programs for the increased physical well being of village people. But men have learned that the increase of material goods alone is not adequate. There must be spiritual values to live by, a sense of direction and destiny, if a more abundant life is to be realized.

At its Meeting, held recently in Dayton, Ohio, the Rural Missions Cooperating Committee of the Division of Foreign Missions agreed on the following four priorities for emphasis during the years ahead:

(1) Governmental programs for technical assistance now provide resources and an atmosphere in which the churches can and must provide a larger and more adequate expression of the Gospel to all of life. One of their unique contributions for the years ahead must be in the spiritual realm of values to live by, as well as material things to live with.

(2) In the recruitment of personnel, both for agricultural missions and for rural evangelism and the ministry, we should make much more use of the large number of dedicated young men and women, now preparing themselves in our agricultural colleges and schools of home economics.

(3) In most instances, personnel is the limiting factor to getting ahead with successful Extension Service Programs among village people. Therefore, a major emphasis must be on the training of Christian Nationals for all types of constructive village work.

(4) There was a time when the missionary was almost alone in his efforts to improve village life and in stressing education among the neglected peoples. Now that some Governments are entering these fields more and more, missionaries may find it possible to pioneer in new and more creative areas of service. We especially commend those who have already begun to enter new fields and projects for relating the Gospel more directly to the village home and within the main stream of village life.

Nebraska School for Community Living

• Living in a democracy is a privilege and a challenge. Every citizen must regard himself as important and endeavor to play a constructive role in the life of the community of which he is a part.

Leadership is an attribute possessed in some measure by everyone; and in a democracy, leadership is everybody's job. One of the crucial tasks of our nation's educational institutions is therefore to assist each person in developing his own peculiar leadership capacities to the end that his contribution to society may attain maximum strength and depth. This task of encouraging the development of leadership qualities is carried on throughout the nation in our elementary and secondary schools. Many young people also go on to college and university, where the process of leadership training is continued, but a large number whose formal education ends with the high school experience receives relatively little attention.

The Nebrasaka School for Community Living is an effort to help this latter group. It provides an informal four-week educational program designed for out-of-school Nebraska youth between the ages of 18 and 25 (single or married) who are not contemplating attendance at any college or university and who reside on a Nebraska farm or in a town of less than 5000 population. High school graduation is not a requirement. The course leads to no academic credits or diplomas. It seeks only to help young people to understand more fully the communities in which they live, to assist them in discovering and developing their various leadership capacities in order that they may contribute more abundantly to the life of those communities, and to broaden their cultural horizons for the enrichment of personal and group living.

The course opens with a get-acquainted session on Sunday evening, February 5, and continues through March 2, 1956. An interesting, well-integrated series of non-credit classes and activities has been arranged, and every effort has been made to provide the best possible leadership. Working directly with the young people will be highly qualified staff members of the University of Nebraska, as well as competent leaders from outside the University. The School for Community Living is under the direction of the University Extension Division, cooperating with the College of Agriculture.

During the 1956 winter four-week term, enrollment will be limited to 15 young men and 15 young women. By virtue of a generous grant from the Woods Charitable Fund, Inc., of Lincoln to the University of Nebraska Foundation, board, room and tuition will be provided free of charge to all participants. Each student, however, will be expected to pay a $10.00 registration fee to cover the cost of instructional materials, and all miscellaneous expenses while in attendance.

Young people who are interested may obtain further details from county agents, from local superintendents of schools, or by writing to Dr. Otto G. Hoiberg, University Extension Division, University of Nebraska, Lincoln 8, Nebraska.

—*University of Nebraska News*

Country Doctor Wins Award

• Dr. E. Roger Samuel, a small-town physician in eastern Pennsylvania, was named "General Practitioner of the Year" (1955) by the American Medical Association at the annual meeting of its House of Delegates, November 29, 1955. Dr. Samuel, 66-years-old, has practiced in his home town of Mount Carmel, Pa., forty-two years. His father practiced there half a century. Dr. Samuel, selected out of fifty nominees, was citied for having served "diligently and enthusiastically" in civic and religious groups covering a wide range of interest. The award is in the form of a plaque.

Are You Moving?

• Please send your new address to TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH. It takes about three weeks to make the necessary adjustments, and we don't want you to miss a copy.

A. Devaney, Inc., N. Y.

James Hearst's Country Men

BENSON Y. LANDIS

• When James Hearst published his book of poems, *Country Men,* he wrote a "dedication" which should be quoted in full in this series about American poets with rural accents:

"Among many other wise words the ancient Greeks said that agriculture is the mother of the arts. It seems to me that this thought is too much lost sight of these days. The actual objective creation man achieves, he achieves with seed and ground, one eye of course always on the weather. The fruit of this union is so beautiful, so concrete, and so satisfying that the personal arts expressed in picture, song, and book seem faint by comparison. A book is only a kind of record; life is rooted in the earth. And it is to the people who understand this that this book is dedicated."

Under the Sign

James Hearst was born in Iowa on a farm near Cedar Falls in 1900, "under the sign of the threshing machine," as he puts it. A concise biographical note by H. Willard Reninger appears in the book, *Country Men,* and here I simply draw upon that excellent source for a brief interpretation of the poet's career. It bears the sub-title, "A Country Man as Poet."

His father was Charles Hearst, one of the strong leaders of the middle-western farm cooperative movement, and a powerful figure in the formative years of the American Farm Bureau Federation. I saw him several times at national meetings and always felt he was a man who radiated a spirit of cooperation. In his own community, Charles Hearst was always receptive to anyone who had new ideas about farming. He was interested in short courses and farmers' institutes before anyone called them adult education. He was an officer of the Iowa Farm Bureau, and later became chairman of the executive committee of the A.F.B.F. Several of the poems resulted from the experiences of the father, who died in 1936. The Hearst family line is Scotch-Irish.

Teachers and Deacons

The poet's mother, Katharine Schell Hearst, furnished example in reading habits and contributed to her family a sense of discipline. Mr. Reninger remarks that no Hearst children ever betrayed a lack of discipline. (I feel like noting this because the National Education Association has, as I write, issued a report saying that 4,300 representative teachers have just put down "discipline" as their number 1 problem.) His mother learned much about human nature by serving as the secretary to the first president of the Iowa State Teachers College.

The poet's paternal grandfather, also James Hearst, once remarked that "the Hearsts have all been teachers or deacons and have never accumulated much of this world's goods."

James Hearst, the farmer-poet, and his brother Charles co-manage the 520 acre farm near Cedar Falls. As a boy James liked to ride horses and to swim. But once he dove too deeply into shallow water, dislocated a vertebra, and has since been handicapped from the injury. His friends admired "his long fight back to health and partial physical maneuverability. . . ."

Learnings from Poets

This poet who aims to be a faithful interpreter of farm life has been an avid reader of other America poets. He has drawn inspiration from Whittier's love of freedom and that

Quaker's testimony concerning the inner light. He admires Emerson and Whitman. Perhaps one would expect him to show special interest in Robert Frost, Carl Sandburg, Vachel Lindsay, and Paul Engle. He also studies and delights in the great Elizabethan poets (these were the models of a poet in Maine, Robert P. Tristram Coffin, whose life and poetry were earlier interpreted.)

The Poet's Purpose

"I have simply tried," Mr. Hearst is quoted, "to use my own accent and to avoid jingle bell verse. And I have tried to give a form, an attractive form if possible, to my own experience and environment. It seemed to me that farm life had never been looked at honestly—either it was sentimentalized or brutalized. I was trying to find out the truth."

Bearing in mind this aim to give an attractive form to environment and the poet's response, I quote from only a few of the excellent poems. From "The Movers":

This, the parade of the landless, the tenants,
the dispossessed,
out of their Canaan they march
with Moses asleep on the Bible.

Who will call them back, who will ask:
Are you the chosen people, do you inherit
only a backward glance and a cry and a
heartbreak?
are you the meek?

But the early twilight
drops like a shower on their shoulders
and sullen water
slowly fills the wagon ruts and hoof prints.

A Sampling

From one entitled "The Grail":

The snow falls like flakes of light—
Wherefore we come, Lord, bearing our
promises . . .
What greater praise canst thou have
Than that we seek the grail
Not in the heavens, Lord, among the stars'
cold radiance,
But in the furrow, the plowed field, the
meadow,
The places where it blooms for man in his
short life.

The first two stanzas of one "Now I Have Taken to the Fields" reads:

Now I have taken to the fields
The secret of my own despair,
Down through the rows of moving corn
With the warm sunlight in my hair

To let the cool wind hush my blood
And bring slow peace within my reach
That I may envy meadow larks
The floating song that is their speech . . .

"Such poems . . . enrich the land by which they are nourished and are its product, as certainly as corn or wheat or wild flowers," wrote Ruth Lucknow in a forword to *Country Men.* She noted that while "firmly grounded" Mr. Hearst's poetry is not local in form or implication. It possesses its own "quiet harmony" and often reaches "its clearest expression" in "strong simplicity." And in these things there is, of course, a universal touch and interest.

The Prairie Press, Iowa City, Iowa, publishes *Country Men* (third printing, 1943) at $1.00 a copy; also another volume, *The Sun at Noon* (1943) at the same price. These books are printed by Carrol Coleman, whose designs of quality enhance the value of these publications.

What Do You Expect?

• You usually get what you look for and little more. And you get what you expect from Lent. If you look at it as a time of giving up something, your life will be as it was at the beginning minus whatever you give up.

But you might expect it to be a time of great increase in love for God, growing daily as the moments of sunlight lengthen. You might expect that it will make you really ready for Easter and a share in the victory it brings.

So think a minute of just what you do expect from Lent. Then start doing the things which make it possible for that expectation to be fulfilled.

Just what do you expect?

—Philip Humason Steinmetz

Winston Pote from A. Devaney, N. Y.

To What Extent Can the Traditional Institutional Church Serve an Area?*

JEANIE K. SHERMAN

• The traditional institutional church in America, unlike the traditional institutional church in Europe and Asia Minor, is rural. During the first centuries of Christianity, beginning with Paul's missionary journeys, those who were eager to help in spreading the Gospel went to the cities. There they either found a group of Jews who were earnestly looking for the promised Messiah and eager to hear and weigh the evidence that was brought of Jesus or there were Gentiles who were eager for a vital faith. Tracing the spread of the early church one may go from city to city around the Mediterranean Sea and then west and north into more of Europe.

This has not been so in America. The traditional church of America, whether the Church of England in Jamestown, the Congregational Church of the Pilgrims at Plymouth, the Roman Catholic Church of Baltimore, the Church of the Friends in Philadelphia, or the Baptists in Providence, has been a pioneer church and in the beginning a rural church. The people were few; provisions and equipment were inadequate; inclimate weather and inadequate knowledge of the crop land caused hardships; Indians took a toll of lives in some communities; but always, there was a church. The cornerstone of many of these churches coincided with the date of settlement.

The rapidly growing cities and the firmly established industrial centers of our nation have had their influence upon the denominational headquarters of the major religious groups. Because these offices have been placed in the large cities where mailing, cabling, telegraphing and shipping are convenient the national leaders have become urbanites in much of their planning and thinking. Thus, out of denominational offices come many plans and programs that are appropriate only for the large city church. Without dwelling upon this misrepresentation of the "traditional institutional church" in America, let me remind you that in this land the traditional church is a rural church.

The Calling

The first essential for service is attitude. This refers to the attitude of the minister toward the community to which he goes to serve as pastor. This is not a business; it is a calling. To be called to serve a rural church is to be called for the task of a specialist who knows all of the basic knowledge of his brother ministers and in addition has specialized so that he may adequately serve the rural church. And it is a place where he sees not what exists but what can exist.

Thus the pastor goes to a rural field with enthusiasm for a task for which he is well trained. He goes to stay long enough to do a constructive bit of Kingdom building. He goes to become a vital leader in the community. He goes with pride, and to his fellow pastor in New York or Los Angeles he speaks with deep satisfaction about his field and about the importance of the work on the prairie or in the valley or by the sea. He is aware of the significance of his task and is eager to tell of the souls in his parish.

Sparsely Populated Areas

The second essential is to know one's area. For this let me give you some of the essential facts of the parish at Timber Lake, South Dakota:

In South Dakota, statistics state that there are eight people to a square mile, but in Dewey and Corson counties, where the Timber Lake Parish is located, there are only three people to a square mile. The total population of Dewey County for 1950 was 4,916, of which almost one-half was Indian. There are two organized cities within the county; one organized town; nine unorganized towns; about seventy townships. The county is governed by five commissioners who meet monthly.

The community receives its net income from small grain and livestock farming. The area around Timber Lake is noted for the raising of alfalfa as hay and seed crops. On the crop land, there is an increase in the desire for conservation practices that will reduce wind and water erosion. 356 acres of trees have been planted to provide field strips, farm windbreaks and game cover plots. The trees around the buildings are planted to protect the farm and livestock from wind and snow. The game cover plots are a protection to the farm, but are mostly to protect the game from severe winters in the area.

Contour strip farming is on the increase. Approximately 1,000 acres of this practice has been applied on cultivated land and it is increasing each year as the farmer becomes more familiar with it.

The Total Picture

Along with a knowledge of this part of the community, the pastor needs to be acquainted with the nationality background of his people, the educational background, religious affiliations, the spare time activities, and a full picture of the people.

Then, the pastor in these sparsely populated communities needs to be as much aware of the leaders with whom he works as does the urban pastor need to be aware of the help of the social service agencies. The church needs to recognize and treat these people as leaders who are also making large contributions to the total community.

The third essential concerns the techniques that a minister may use in helping the church in these sparsely settled areas to grow:

First, map out your area. See the total picture. Know that those who are unchurched are potential members of the church. They need Christ. No other community program, how-

* From an address before the Conference on Churching Sparsely Populated Areas, Bismarck, N. D., November, 1955.

ever fine it may be, can give them the spiritual need for their souls that the church of Christ can give—whether they realize it or not. The difficulty with many a minister is that he expects to see the fruits of twenty years of hard labor when he preaches his first sermon. It just does not happen that way. Thus, catch a vision of what the church may be if you really work and teach others to work with you. You will find that after ten years on the field, you will still find families who are your potential members whom you assumed (or whom you were told) belonged to another church but who really have been unchurched for years and whose children have never entered a church.

Second, never hesitate because of distance. These men trade in your town; they have their machinery fixed in your town; they go to the movies in your town; they gather at some patriotic or recreational events in your town; they attend political meetings and REA meetings and farm meetings in your town and you want them to attend church in your town. It is essential that they become a part of the town church and not have wee schoolhouse churches with four or five families and no adequate music, Sunday school or fellowship for them. If they can come to town for repairs or for anything else, they can come to church.

Thirdly, although one may know many of the needs of the community and although one may even be concerned that the best choices be made—these people can think for themselves and know better than the minister does that the minister does not know everything. When talking about stock and farming—converse as the learner; if you want the man taught, ask the cooperation of the County Agent or the soil conservation representative. He knows how to just "happen to drop in" after you have suggested that he call. Very often the AA will be of more help to the habitual drunkard than you can be; be big enough to ask the help of the farmer who is an AA to be on the alert to help some one in your parish.

This leads us to the *fourth* point: Serve your people well.

Children

The real reason that many churches do not have large groups of young people is that they have never seen some of their children as individuals until they got into high school. From the day a child is born, that child is a most important member of the parish. There will be the visit at the hospital; the dedication service at the church; suggested literature for the parents to use; and always in the visits to the home—take notice of this child. Parents will need help with suggested graces and prayers for little ones; have a church group where these children will learn to pray publicly. Many a mother and father in our church has learned to pray publicly because in the informal Sunday evening service Terry or Patsy prayed with sixty people present.

Young People

Here is a large opportunity. These are the years when important decisions are made, and vocational guidance is given individually.

Every year, six weeks of special classes are held for these young people. Friendships are made here—marriage, vacations, and problems are discussed as well as the deeper meaning of communion, growth in prayer and guidance for Bible reading. Youth activities consist of three-act plays, camping, visitation. With the help of the County Agent leather tooling, metal tooling, wood carving and many other crafts are taught.

Adults

A monthly paper goes to every home, as well as one other mailing each month—church calendars or denominational publications.

A House Blessing Service is held for new homes and for newly married couples. The importance of the home as a center of the work of Christ is always taught.

Visitation is encouraged—especially the distant folk visiting the town families and the town families visiting the country folk.

This call of the rural ministry—in what other field are there such deep joys?

Churching Sparsely Settled Areas*

RALPH W. CHAMBERLAIN

• The Sandhills of Nebraska, which takes in about 25,000 square miles in the north-western third of the state, is where I work as pastor to the cowboys.

Fifty or sixty years ago the sandhills were just blowing sand dunes. Grass struggling to grow along the creeks and low places was burned off by fire only to start over again. Then the white men came and kept down the prairie fires. (This is one of the few places in the world where the white man has redeemed the soil.) Now there are about one and one-half persons and about forty-five cows to the square mile.

The cowboys of Nebraska are not swept off their feet because a pastor or missionary happens to stop off to see them or has an occasional service for them. They often feel that the church is interested only in the money it will be able to get from them. The pastor has to prove that he is genuinely interested in their welfare.

Lay leadership has a definite place in the life of these churches, but what the people of the scattered areas really need and want is a fully-ordained pastor—a leader and counselor.

The Church to the People

So often it has been said by unthinking people, "The people know where the church is, let them come

(*Continued on Page* 12)

* From an address at the Conference on Sparsely Populated Areas, Bismarck, N. D., November, 1955.

(*Continued from Page* 11)

to it." But that is not the spirit of Christ—the church must go to the people. We conduct preaching services, Sunday schools and vacation Bible schools in little school houses, tiny country churches and community dance halls.

Church activities for young people are sadly neglected in sparsely settled areas. No one takes the time or the responsibility to sponsor them or to see that some one else does. Thus these young people seek to satisfy their natural desire to be with other young people by frequenting organizations other than the churches.

So far as time and energy permits, we try to have parties for the young people—they enjoy this sort of good fellowship.

Sunday school missions, mobile ministries and lumber-camp work are a few of the mediums which the church is using to reach the people in the sparsely settled areas of our country—to tell them the Good News of Christ's redeeming love and power.

Rural Church Bulletins Get Free Mailing Privilege

• Extension of the "free in county" mailing privilege long accorded weekly newspapers to church bulletins or parish papers is an unexpected by-product of the legislation approved by Congress (Public Law 170, 84th Congress) making it easier for church bulletins to obtain second-class mailing privileges.

Church bulletins entered as second-class matter will enjoy free mailing to all subscribers living on rural routes within the county in which they are published, as well as to box holders in small towns and villages that do not have city carrier service.

The amendment to the postal laws approved by Congress permits any church or religious organization to enter its publication as second-class matter simply by voting that it be sent all members of record and that part of their contribution be considered a subscription to the parish or denominational publication.

Church Building*

CHARLES BOLE

• A recent writer, obviously an architect, has written a book called, *Architecture, Ambition and Americans.* His thesis relates achitectural tastes to socio-economic trends. I think we can all sense what he is thinking about as we journey in imagination from a New England traditional village church to an extremely modern church in some bustling western city. About the only way to distinguish some of our modern churches is to look for a cross—than you know that it is a church and not a public school or an office building. Our church buildings range all the way from the majestic Gothic to the extremely functional institution.

Before Church Chancels

The New Testament church consisted of a fellowship that met in upper rooms, in homes, and sometimes in underground grottoes. Basically, the idea was fellowship and communication. I hardly think we have gotten away from this concept.

Anything that impinges on the fellowship, the sense of missions, the teaching ministry, falls short of being a church. You may well ask, how can a church impinge on any of these? As our architect friend writes of "Ambition," so can we all cite congregations where ambition and not service was the prominent motivation.

The church structure should be large enough but simply adorned; functional but with a sense of dignity; well within the means of the congregation so that fellowship is not destroyed.

The altar is the center of Protestant worship. But because altars are beautiful, one often runs into churches with altars in primary departments as well as in sanctuaries. Now what of the teaching facilities?

To many people the word "program" is synonmous with "promotion" and the regimen of some hierarachy some place in their ivory towers. Too often the church program becomes a stimultant to energize the church leaders who have little spiritual imagination and "know-how." If all Christians tithed, we wouldn't need Stewardship Promotion! If all Christians knew and studied their Bibles, we wouldn't need nearly so much curriculum help; if all Christians were dedicated to witnessing, we would not need to promote Evangelism.

We need pastors who are well informed about new challenges; we need laymen who believe that they *are* the church.

Lay of the Land

The rural church has one advantage which the city church does not have: room enough to be extravagant in the layout of the building. It is advisable to build on one level, unless the lay of the land permits a two-level entrance to the building. The values of the one-level plant are now pretty generally accepted: it is economical; it is of easy access; it has sound control; and heating is no longer a problem. In today's building, the nearest door leads into the open air. This is truly a blessing to children and older people.

Churches break roughly into two groups as they plan a building—either they build a sanctuary and then add class rooms, or they build an educational plant and add a sanctuary.

I have one clue to the church that really understands and loves its children, and that is to visit the nursery. This room needs privacy, a warm rug on the floor, small furniture, pictures on the walls, toys for constructive play, bright paint, good air and light. This room is important for it is where the child gets his first and most lasting impression of the church.

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* From an address before the Conference on Sparsely Populated Areas, Bismarck, N. D., November, 1955

Study, worship, fellowship, recreation, creative activities and group projects all contribute to the growth of the persons who participate in them—children, youth and adults.

How we build for a variety of experiences depends largely on our budget. I believe that with proper planning one room could be designed for fellowship, study and worship.

Planning

Before building or remodeling, a church-planning conference would be in order. Every group in the church should indicate its program needs. Many of these can then be correlated, checked and double-checked so that when the final plans are drawn the program is integrated into the very living function of the building.

Be sure in studying the program that the committee does not stop with the existing program but also studies the community to discover future needs. Population trends indicate that more space and equipment will be needed to take care of the next decade's membership.

It is advisable, also, to retain the services of an architect who understands the philosophy, the history and the objectives of your denomination.

Key

A feel of something, early-sensed,
Has stayed, to bless me still . . .
A tanager's quick flame against
The silver of a snow-kissed hill;

The circle where white violets lay
Waxen, on leaves' dark sheen . . .
The highlight of a childhood's May,
When I was richer than a queen;

The way the mockingbird would sound
On its return in spring . . .
(There are no words have yet been found
To tell how it could sing);

A stream, with crystal-laden banks
And topaz-spated thaw . . .
I have but humbly worded thanks
For Him who taught me beauty's law . . .

Who taught me eyes and ears were key
To those bright paths of heaven
That lead to an eternity
Of loveliness, God's leaven.

—Martha Sherwood Johnson
Reprinted from *The Country Poet*

Warren Wilson on The Open Country Church

A Series of Historical Notes

• On October 25, 1911, Warren H. Wilson, the "dean" of the rural church fellowship of the United States, finished writing the preface to his book, *The Church of the Open Country,* published soon thereafter by the Missionary Education Movement, New York. This was one of a large list of "Forward Mission Study Courses," which were planned by a conference of leaders in young people's mission work, held in 1901. Wilson's is listed as No. 20 in one series of 32 text-books. It was reported that over 1,500,000 copies of the 32 had been distributed.

This digest is solely concerned with reporting what Dr. Wilson wrote. In his preface he noted that four farmers out of ten were renters. "The future of the Church is with them. . . . To give them the Gospel is the acute problem of the church in the open country." Wilson also wrote an Appendix, "How Denmark Did It." This was a long reference to the work of Bishop N. F. S. Grundtvig, whose ideas resulted in the founding of the Folk High Schools, which did so much to transform Danish life. Wilson also praised Bishop Grundtvig in the text, and the book contained a photo of the Dane. There was also a photograph of John Frederic Oberlin, whose work was also commended.

The book also contained Liberty Hyde Bailey's poem, "The Country Church," which some have thought "too humanist." It included these lines:

> *I stand in the fields,*
> *Where the wide earth yields,*
> *Her bounties of fruit and grain;*
> *Where the furrows turn*
> *Till the plowshares burn*
> *As they come round and round*
> *again; . . .*

"There are not a few who ask the question, 'What is the use of the Church in the open country?' " Thus Wilson opened his preface in realistic terms. Wilson restated some of the views of those who wanted to abolish the open country church, but concluded: "It becomes the church to serve the farmer where he lives." He also noted that many farmers were under "economic pressure."

Wilson quoted a host of authorities, including the editors of the *Outlook,* Kenyon L. Butterfield, Sir Horace Plunkett, the Commission on Country Life appointed by Theodore Roosevelt. He noted that Liberty Hyde Bailey was already writing on "The Holy Earth."

Four important stages in American rural life had already taken place, Wilson believed: That of the pioneer, or the solitary farmer; that of the land or household farmer; that of the speculative farmer; that of the husbandman, or organized farmer. Most farmers were too independent to organize, thought Wilson, but he made many favorable references to farmers' cooperatives of his day. He noted that an unnamed country minister had helped to organize cooperatives among Minnesota's dairymen.

The impact of the pioneer was to be seen everywhere; it interfered with the application of cooperative principles in business, education, and religion. In "over-churched" communities, religion was a "separating force." There was trouble when one tried to enforce the liquor laws. There was too much speculation in farm land.

"The exaltation of giving," the organization of benevolence through community interest, Wilson heartily recommended for a day in which there was much decay and much need of repair. In Groton, Mass., near the famous school, an old farmer told Wilson that he and his neighbors had thoughtlessly exhausted their land. Wilson saw "a relation" between "economic, moral, and religious life." The Church must encourage scientific farming. The gov-

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ernment was offering their aids. The South's fight against the boll weevil was hailed as an inspiring one. "The minister should be a community leader, who should emphasize rural, and not urban values."

Wilson not only praised Oberlin. He quoted Thomas Nixon Carver, then professor of economics at Harvard, lauding the humble pastor at Waldersbach in Alsace, who was a farmer, a road-builder, a bridge builder, an educator, a printer, a pastor of all the people.

"The country church is married to the rural community," Wilson wrote, stating that the church revealed "community conditions." He wanted the church to become a community center, recognizing that communities are "of infinitely varied size and form." Many churches existed only to provide a place where a man preached sermons. "All day sings" helped to bring people together in some places. "I confess that no scene stirs my heart more deeply than the sight of many horses and carriages standing about the country church, the horse sheds full, every tree a hitching post, and rows of riding horses and carriage animals tethered to the fences; these all give an impression of the assembled community." Mothers sat with their children, Wilson noted (in 1911).

Farming was entering the "price and market regime," Wilson noted; this meant farm families were becoming cash-conscious. He urged improvements to the church plant, and better salaries for ministers. Salaries of $400 are mentioned. And the church should become more thoroughly organized. The Sunday school should emphasize community service as well as its formal teaching. Farmers should teach the classes.

II

"Religious inspiration" was needed for public education, Wilson believed. The common school would remain, but it needed better motivation. In Denmark, Wilson said, the schoolmasters had reconstructed the nation, within forty years.

The one-room school had been of enormous influence, but its usefulness was diminishing. Organized and scientific farmers were not being served as well as their fathers by the one-room school. Lack of good schools handicapped the churches. Teachers needed "living salaries." Also, these small schools needed supervision. Consolidation seemed necessary. Wilson gave a picture of the John Swaney School, Putnam County, Ill., with a score of wagons in which pupils had come. Recreation equipment was needed in the schools. When schools were used for recreation, they became community centers.

The extension work of the agricultural colleges was praised. (This was before the day of the federal-state system.) Farmers often called the teachers in these colleges "book farmers," but their function was becoming recognized. Book farming was not being ridiculed as much as formerly, Wilson observed.

In 1911, the private academies were remembered more vividly than in our day. "They were centers of culture." Their teachers were scholars. Wilson hoped that some of the academies might become like the Danish Folk High Schools. "The Old Testament is the gospel of country life for Christian folk," Wilson wrote. The Sunday schools should teach the Old Testament so as to aid in the re-development of country life. The country church should make of the rural community "the holy land of America."

"Morality and Recreation" were linked by Wilson in one of his chapters. To many people opposed to recreation, Wilson wrote: "play is highly moral."

"In the past twenty years the churches have become concerned about communities. Without forgetting the household, the heart of the church has been enlarged to take in a whole community."

"The great danger of the teacher, the pastor, the church-worker is that he will be too nice, too scholastic, and too much concerned with race and curious things. Service to the community is concerned with common things. These common things make up the life of marginal people."

"Ministers should have a living wage. . . . Of course, there are a few men who have done heroically on $600 a year."

In a chapter, "Cooperation and Federation," Wilson noted that everybody seemed to believe in federating local churches, but "it is an ideal of men rather than a practice."

"Modern Christian people are craving the federation of the churches in order that the church may truly reflect the life of a cooperating and uniting people."

Cooperatives among farmers received Wilson's hearty endorsement. "Farming is essentially cooperative. . . . The growth of cooperative customs among farmers is, therefore, to be encouraged by the churches. . . ."

"We are learning new methods of distributing the wealth of the people in the interest of the whole people, and these methods are religious."

—Benson Y. Landis

Indiana Convocation

• Indiana held its first state-wide convocation of town and country churches at Purdue University, West Lafayette, November 10-11, 1955. The sessions were attended by 130 persons, representing ten denominations.

The Division of Town and Country Churches of the Indiana Council of Churches was formed some three years ago, and one of the first items on its program was the convening of such a convocation. Three purposes were uppermost in the planning: a closer relation of Indiana rural churches to the world program of Christianity; a study of current problems in Indiana rural life; and fellowship out of which a growing program of cooperative work might come.

The opening address, "The Rural Church of Today Faces Tomorrow," was given by Dr. Henry S. Randolph, secretary of town and country church work for the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., and chairman of the Department of Town and Country Church of the National Council of Churches. Later, Dr. C. Morton Hanna, supervisor of rural church work for the Louisville Presbyterian

Theological Seminary, delivered an address on, "I Would Do It Again," giving some of the philosophy, theology and heritage of the rural church movement. Dr. Hanna, one of the great pioneers of the movement, tied the achievements of the past with the opportunities and challenges of the present.

The convocation concluded with an address by the Rev. Russell Hoy, pastor of the Community Church, Canal Lewisville, Coshocton, Ohio, and chaplain of the Ohio State Grange, on "The Challenge to Today's Rural Church," in which he gave encouragement, inspiration, and motivation for the revitalization of the rural church and its community.

The meeting in Indiana followed very closely the pattern of the National Convocation on the Church in Town and Country, one of the strong points of the program being the commissions. These commissions dealt specifically with rural church problems in Indiana, reaching out beyond only when the areas were interrelated. The *Rural-Urban Fringe* problem offered a challenge, as it does in other parts of the nation, for Indiana has seven metropolitan areas, along with several other rapidly growing cities. Dr. Franklin Eugene Rector, Butler University, served as resource leader for this commission. Dr. Hanna, who was one of the founders of the Todd-Dickey Larger Parish (Presbyterian) in southern Indiana, conducted a commission on *Larger Parishes, Pastoral Unities, and Yoked Fields.* Dr. Alfred C. Bartholomew, Evangelical and Reformed Theological Seminary, Lancaster, Pennsylvania, served as resource leader for the commission on *Theology and Rural Life.*

Other commissions were: *Church and Community Cooperation,* led by Russell Hoy; *Christian Vocations in Town and Country,* led by Stanley Hamilton, former director of the Rural Life Association and now Regional Adult Education Director, National Farmers' Union; and *New Testament Stewardship in Town and Country,* led by Nevin Danner, Executive Secretary, Evansville Council of Churches. Dr. Walter L. Hand, new Executive Secretary, Indiana Council of Churches, was present throughout the convocation and gave a report and analysis of the commission meetings during the concluding session of the convocation.

The program, in addition to the feature addresses and commissions, had many other interesting parts. Two reports on how successful church programs were developed, under the heading, "How We Did It," were made by the Rock Run Church of the Brethren, Goshen; and the New Lisbon Church of Christ (Disciple), Union City. Another report was made on the survey of Indiana rural churches which has been conducted by the Social and Educational Department of the Indiana Farm Bureau and is now being tabulated and analyzed by Purdue University. Warren O'Hara, Director of the Department of Education, Indiana Farm Bureau, reported on the progress of the survey and Dr. J. Edwin Losey of the Department of Agricultural Economics, Purdue University, made a preliminary analysis. The Rev. Garland L. Horton reported on the Crawford County Exploratory group, another program project of the Town and Country Church Division.

The spiritual content of the convocation was deepened by carefully prepared worship services conducted by three rural pastors.

It was announced that the Division would sponsor another such meeting in 1957.

—Lonnie H. Hass

Embroidered on a Sampler in Greenfield Village

I've dared to put the world on wheels,
And now I am afraid
Lest men should never stop again
To see how snails are made.

Now that he holds it
He knows this treasure
Above all others:
Faith so certain
Shall never be shaken
By heaviest sorrow.

—Bhagavad-Gita

BOOK REVIEWS

The Story of FAO. By Gove Hambidge. Van Nostrand Co., Inc., New York. 1955. $6.50.

This is an absorbing account of the first ten years of one of the most humanitarian efforts of all time. To read the book is to put oneself in the current of a new kind of history in the making.

This story of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, just now celebrating its tenth anniversary, is much more inclusive than the title suggests. Into it have been woven the advances in the sciences of agriculture and nutrition and the development of national concern and commitment that made possible this international cooperative effort to banish hunger and improve the economic and social condition of rural people throughout the world.

The work is beautifully written and the forty-eight illustrations add to its interest. Mr. Hambidge writes with intimate knowledge. He served on the U.S. delegation to the first United Nations Conference on Food and Agriculture at Hot Springs, Virginia, in 1943, and as executive secretary of the Interim Commission that wrote the FAO constitution. He was the first person appointed to the staff after FAO came into being in Quebec in 1945, with forty-four countries cooperating. Mr. Hambidge, now FAO North American Regional Representative, with headquarters in Washington, D. C., has seen this number grow to seventy-two.

Part I of the book describes the life of an Egyptian villager as fairly typical of many millions whose life is a constant struggle to keep body and soul together, and the life of an Iowa farmer starting out in the early part of the century. In telling of the life of the American farmer, he describes the development of modern agriculture, hand in hand with industry, that has made American agriculture so productive and provided

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Book Reviews

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high standards of living for the farm family.

The gap between the two farmers is a wide one, but as the author points out, it is not one due to inherent capacity as much as to conditions that are capable of change. "To crack world poverty is at least as massive and difficult as cracking the atom. All the brains and resources that can be spared for it will not be too much." Nor is the gap one of poverty of food, only, but of clothing, health facilities, education, housing, and other social and economic amenities. Closing the gap will demand international effort, wisdom, good will, and persistence.

Part II deals with the genesis and development of FAO, and makes exciting reading. The author traces the growth of our knowledge of nutrition, also our knowledge of the world's malnutrition; the idea that something practical could be done about it the early efforts of the League of Nations; the part played by Lord Boyd Orr of Scotland and Lord Bruce and F. L. McDougall of Australia; the calling by President Roosevelt of the Hot Springs Conference on Food and Agriculture in May, 1943; the work of the Interim Commission; and, finally, the Quebec Conference at which, on October 16, 1945, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations was formally established.

FAO was born out of the idea of Freedom from Want and the conviction that the time had come to fulfill this age-old aspiration of mankind. Headquarters were established in Washington, D. C., with Lord Boyd Orr as Director-General. Since 1951, FAO's headquarters have been in Rome. It operates around the world through its Divisions of Agriculture, Fisheries, Forestry, Economics, Nutrition, Information, and Administration.

Part III describes briefly the technical assistance activities carried on, both on a regional and country basis. By the summer of 1955, more than a thousand technical experts had been recruited and sent to the requesting countries. The present accomplishment is just a beginning. Per capita food in many areas is still below prewar, and vast evolutionary changes in most of the world lie ahead, before its people can be said to be adequately fed. FAO will play a leading role as this great human drama unfolds.

The contributions to rural development and welfare by church and other private organizations are generously recognized by the author.

For anyone interested in the contribution of food and agriculture to rural betterment and world peace, this book is a *must*.

—John H. Reisner

Speak to the Earth. By Ralph N. Helverson. The Beacon Press, Boston, 1955. 75 cents.

"Too much city life is not good for man. As Bergson once said, 'Man was designed to live in very small societies.' There is no substitute for a blue sky and a healing sun, for an open stream and a high hill."

Thus it is written in the essay for the 11th day, in this booklet whose theme is "that spiritual reality is mediated to us in nature as well as in history." "The mood of these pages is reflective, devotional. They portray contemplation which grows out of everyday experience."

In the essay for the 16th day Mr. Helverson writes: "A man needs relations to his fellows, to society, to the workaday world, but he needs relations also to the spirit, to ideals, to the earth and sun and stars, to streams and fields and the hills."

At the end of each reading comes a prayer or poem. Among the poets quoted, Edwin Markham is well represented.

Mr. Helverson, born in Missouri, is now one of the chaplains to students at Cornell University, Ithaca, and is minister of the Unitarian Church in Ithaca, N. Y.

"Speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee." *Job* 12:8.

—Benson Y. Landis

"I think all Christians agree in the essential articles, and that their differences are trivial, and rather political than religious."

—Samuel Johnson

And Let The Glory Go. By Paul Scott Mowrer. Wake-Brook House, Sanbornville, N. H. 1955. $3.00.

Mr. Mowrer, who had a career of distinction in journalism on city streets, has found a new life in rural New Hampshire. This is his fourth book of verse. "These deep woods . . . have made me new," he writes in a poem addressed to his departed father. He now spends several hours a day writing verse, and, according to another of the poems, has also had fellowship of a high order with his neighbors.

"From a North Woods Clearing" is the sub-title of the largest section of these poems, which also include references to the South, war-time, and travels in Europe.

When Mr. Mowrer writes about experience in the north woods, he has an eye and an ear for varieties of significance. "The Old Wilks Place" concludes, in part:

Decay and ruin can be life's good arm; . . .
God meant this hill for forest, not for farm.

There are "Rondeaus to Four American Birds." The junco, commonly called the snowbird, "this quiet bird in Quaker gray." The hermit thrush: "No other bird . . . has quite so sweet and pure a note." The blue jay: "We're half inclined to vow this rogue has been maligned." The chicadee: "What guest could charm us more than these."

Mr. Mowrer's combination of fire and form attains great power in his final poem, "A Psalm of Awe and Wonder." It is introduced with Goethe's observation: "The highest point man can reach is wonder,"

With humbleness, wonder and awe;
To endure, though he sorrow and grieve;
To know, to doubt, to believe, . . .
Even unto his ultimate breath
To hope, with a faith beyond death.

The title comes from Virgil's *Georgics*: "Give me the woodlands and the brooks, and let the glory go."

Simple justice requires a reviewer to add that this is a beautiful hand-made book, produced by skilled craftsmen. The first edition was bound in a variety of hand-made Oriental papers and colors.

—B. Y. L.